



Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program

What is the Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program?

With funding from USAID, the Laikipia Wildlife Forum, a membership organization, builds the capacity of communities in Laikipia County to manage and protect the area's abundant natural resources and to use those resources strategically to improve livelihoods. The program promotes innovative strategies for rangeland management, river and wetland management, conservation enterprise development, and forest management.



Photo: USAID/LWF

Herders plan for grazing in Ngwesi

Project Duration and Budget

October 2009 – October 2012

\$ 2.4 million

Who implements the Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program?

Laikipia Wildlife Forum,

www.laikipia.org

Where does the Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program work?

NRMBC works in all communities in Laikipia County and with communities in Nyeri, Meru, Samburu and Isiolo Counties.

What does the Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program do?

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum works with pastoralist communities to increase understanding of the value of effective conservation and natural resource management in maintaining a healthy and productive natural environment that supports lives and livelihoods. Activities include:

Rangeland Management Program

- RMP supports restoration and preservation of pastoral land, promoting environmentally sound decision-making that strengthens relationships between grazing animals, predators, and grasslands.

Rivers and Wetlands Management Program

- RWMP is a 23-river initiative that builds awareness between upstream community water users and users at the downstream level.

Conservation Enterprise Development Program

- CEDP promotes ethical trade in indigenous plants by building producer capacity, promoting enterprise partnerships, and supporting infrastructure development. Focus products include aloes and other medicinal plants, essential oils, bee products, and gums and resins.

Forest Management Program

- FMP builds capacity among forest users to actively participate in the management of their land through development of community organizations that design and implement forest management plans.

How is the Program making a difference?

- With support from USAID, LWF has developed the first countywide wildlife conservation strategy in Kenya.
- LWF supports water resource user associations on 24 rivers, community forest associations in 10 forests, and community conservancies and grazing management committees in 13 pastoralist ranch groups.
- Producers capacity-building network links 830 producers of conservation-friendly natural products.
- A LWF environmental education and eco-literacy program targets 340 schools.
- Wildlife in Laikipia has increased by 15%.

What key challenges does the Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program face?

Population growth in Laikipia County stretches use of land and natural resources. Frequent droughts and water scarcity threaten land management, community livelihoods, and competition over natural resources. A lack of knowledge and access to sustainable building materials and water to irrigate crops leads to unsustainable use of forests and rivers.

The Laikipia Natural Resource Management and Biodiversity Conservation Program in action

The lives and livelihoods of Laikipia County's pastoralists, ranchers, small hold farmers, and tourism operators are inextricably intertwined with the health and well-being of the area's abundant natural resources. Nestled in the shadow of Mount Kenya, Laikipia is home to the "Big Five" mammals – elephant, lion, leopard, water buffalo, and rhinos – and to the planet's largest population of endangered species such as Grevy's Zebra and the Reticulated Giraffe. Laikipia boasts 500 species of the medicinal plant, Aloe, and several hundred native bee species.

Harnessing those rich resources while sustaining the area's rich biodiversity is among Laikipia's biggest challenges. In partnership with the Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Desert Edge, a nonprofit conservation enterprise, is building an ethical plant-based trade to diversify the livelihoods of the people of Laikipia. Responding to increasing demand from national and international markets for honey, beeswax, and beauty products from natural ingredients, Desert Edge is helping communities in Laikipia develop environmentally sound and sustainable conservation-based enterprises. As a result, community members are diversifying and supplementing their livestock-based incomes by drawing from their own natural resources.

Desert Edge's training in business and finance management, beekeeping technologies, and organic farming for more than 831 producers has streamlined business operations and yielded higher quality products. Importantly, the women of Laikipia now play a larger role in harvesting, processing, and packaging products. Training sessions are held in community areas to allow women to participate more easily. "Through the income raised from the sale of honey and aloe to Desert Edge, I am now able to send my second child to school," Ngina Muthoka declared.

For more information:

www.laikipia.org

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Photo: USAID/Kenya



Livestock Herders in Laikipia are leaning about rangeland management through the project.

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